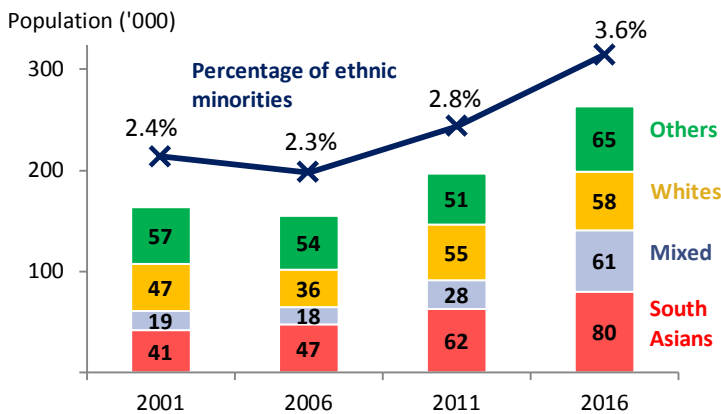




## Education challenges faced by South Asians

**Figure 1 – Population of ethnic minorities, 2001-2016\***



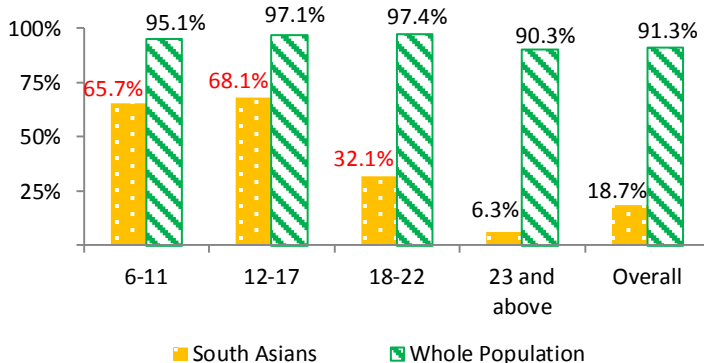
Note: (\*) EM excludes foreign domestic helpers throughout this note.

**Figure 2 – Selected socio-economic attributes of South Asians in 2016**

	South Asians	Ethnic minorities	Whole population*
Poverty rate (before policy intervention)	25.7%	19.4%	19.9%
Share of elementary workers	21.6%	12.7%	13.7%
Median monthly employment earnings	HK\$15,000	HK\$20,000	HK\$15,500
Unemployment rate	5.3%	4.6%	3.7%
% of households residing in private rental housing	65.5%	51.5%	16.5%

Note: (\*) Figures exclude foreign domestic helpers.

**Figure 3 – Proportion of South Asians capable of writing Chinese by age group in 2016**

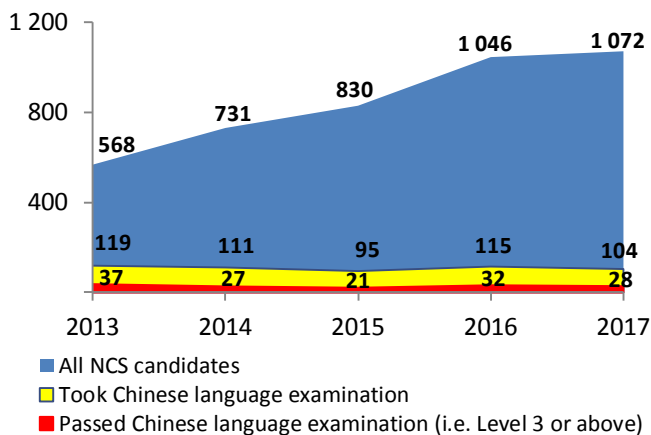


## Highlights

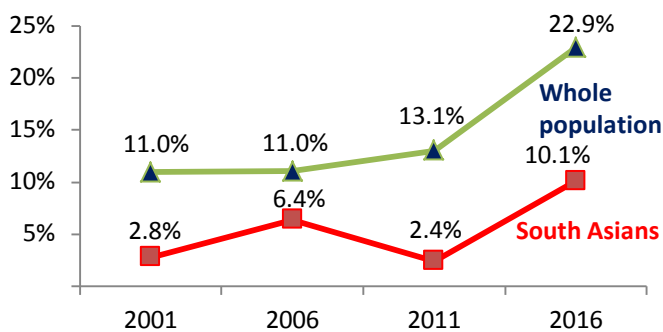
- Excluding foreign domestic helpers and based on population census results, the number of ethnic minorities ("EM") in Hong Kong increased by a cumulative 61% in 15 years to some 263 600 in 2016. They accounted for 3.6% of the local population in 2016, up from 2.4% in 2001. Within EM, 30% were South Asians (including Indians, Pakistanis, Nepalese, Bangladeshis and Sri-Lankans) in 2016, also up from 25% in 2001 (**Figure 1**).
- Livelihood of South Asians has been a public concern in Hong Kong, as they face greater challenges in employment. In 2016, the poverty rate of South Asians in Hong Kong was 26%, noticeably higher than that of 19% for EM and 20% for the overall population. Relative to the local workforce, South Asians are more likely to be engaged in lower-skilled jobs with lower monthly income. The unemployment rate of South Asians was 5.3% in 2016, visibly higher than that of 3.7% for the local labour force. As 66% of the South Asian households were tenants in private housing, rental cost could take up a large part of their income (**Figure 2**).
- Turning to education, South Asians face a language barrier, as more than four-fifths of them could not write Chinese. While the younger generation of South Asians fare better as some of them were locally born, their language proficiency is still an issue of concerns. In 2016, there were 6 171 South Asian children aged 6-11 largely receiving primary education, but only 66% of them could write Chinese. For the other 6 400 South Asian children aged 12-17 largely receiving secondary education, only 68% could write Chinese (**Figure 3**).

## Education challenges faced by South Asians (cont'd)

**Figure 4 – Number of NCS students taking Chinese language examination in HKDSE**

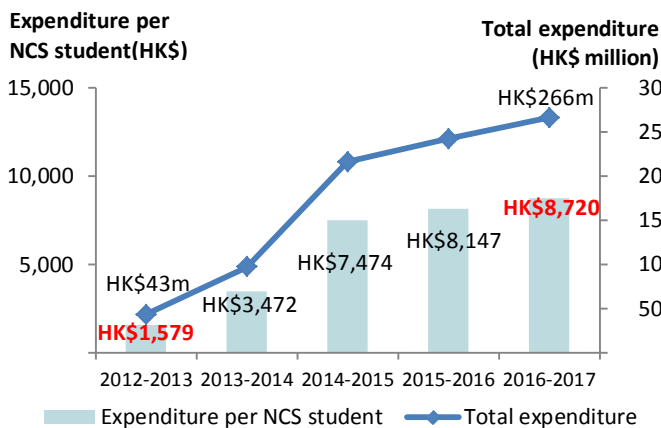


**Figure 5 – Proportion of South Asians aged 18-22 receiving degree education\*, 2001-2016**



Note: (\*) It refers to the proportion of people studying full-time degree courses in educational institutions in Hong Kong, some of which are UGC-funded courses.

**Figure 6 – Per capita additional government expenditure on NCS students\***



Note: (\*) Figures do not include items subsumed under the overall expenditure of the Education Bureau.

### Highlights

- This language barrier makes it more difficult for non-Chinese speaking ("NCS") students to get into local universities funded by the University Grant Council ("UGC"). In 2017, there were altogether 1 072 NCS candidates taking the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination ("HKDSE"), but most of them (968 or 90%) did not take the Chinese language examination, which was a key entrance requirement of UGC-funded universities (**Figure 4**). For the rest of 104 candidates taking the language examination, only 27% managed to meet the entrance requirement of UGC-funded universities, less than half of that of 56% for all candidates in Hong Kong.
- In response to the concerns that the Chinese language examination at HKDSE is too difficult for NCS students, UGC-funded universities have accepted results of other international tests on Chinese language in the admission process since 2008. On top of that, Applied Learning Chinese was also introduced as an alternative language qualification at HKDSE in 2015, with the first cohort of 131 NCS candidates sitting for the exam and a high passing rate of 88.5% in 2017. In spite of these initiatives, only 10% of South Asians aged 18-22 were pursuing degree education (including degree programmes not funded by UGC) in Hong Kong, less than half of the respective rate of 23% for the entire population (**Figure 5**).
- Education Bureau has been stepping up support designated for NCS students in recent years, with such additional expenditure surging by 519% in five years to HK\$266 million in 2016-2017. On a per capita basis, the average additional expenditure rose by 452% to HK\$8,720 over the same period (**Figure 6**). These support measures include additional funding to those schools with NCS students, providing tailor-made Chinese learning programmes and offering subsidies for taking international tests on Chinese language.

Data sources: Latest figures from Census and Statistics Department, Education Bureau, and Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority.

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